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With the Compliments of
SIR CHARLES TUPPER.

1896
A Calumny Refuted.*

Sir John Macdonald & Sir Chas. Tupper
regarding Archbishop Lynch &
Roman Catholics

For many years past it has been from time to time alleged by the Opposition leaders and press, that the late Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper, (or one or the other of them as the political exigencies of the Liberal party required) had in 1879, referred to the late Archbishop Lynch of Toronto, and Roman Catholics generally, in terms of the utmost opprobrium and particularly in that they had expressed themselves as having "no confidence in the breed."

Both Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper, had, whenever this charge was made, given it the most indignant, emphatic and circumstantial denial. But it was nevertheless persisted in, and quite recently was brought up in Parliament by the Honorable Mr. Laurier, who repeated the accusation, and it was echoed by Sir Richard Cartwright, the Honorable David Mills, the Honorable F. Langelier, the Hon. L. H. Davies and others of lesser note.

The discussion and correspondence which then took place, and followed thereafter, is now given in order that those specially interested may judge for themselves of this miserable charge formulated against the Premier of Canada, and his honored predecessor Sir John Macdonald, which is proven to have had its inception in theft and forgery, to be without the shadow of foundation so far as those statesmen are concerned, and which must of necessity, it is submitted, recoil on the heads of those who unworthily concocted and used it for their own improper purposes.

On the 8th April, 1896, in the course of a speech continuing the obstruction on the Manitoba School Bill, the Hon. Mr. Laurier spoke as follows:—

"And this is the head of that party who here poses as the advocate of the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba. Roman Catholics everywhere know what esteem the hon. gentleman has for them. They know that at one time he expressed himself—to use the very choice language which he then made use of—that he had no confidence in the breed. If he had no confidence in the breed, let me tell him that the breed reciprocates the compliment."

On the 11th April, 1896, Sir Richard Cartwright thus referred to the same matter.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—I am sorry to interrupt the hon gentleman (Mr. Wallace), but I am afraid he will not get any answer from the Government. With his permission and with the permission of the committee, I would like to clear up a disputed matter about which there was a good deal of contradiction of sinners the other evening. It is well to know to whom we are indebted for certain historic phrases. Now, there is a historic phrase the paternity of which is in dispute, but the authority for which I am able to lay before the House :

Sir Charles Tupper to J. A. Macdonell :

Ottawa, May 20, 1879.

MY DEAR MACDONELL :

I have consulted Sir John about that matter of the old Bank of Upper Canada premises, and we have decided to knock off the interest, as you suggest. The case will go before Council forthwith, as Sir John says but little confidence is to be placed in the breed, we shall hold its final settlement in abeyance until after the election, when it can be passed through.

The whole correspondence is to be found in the *Toronto Globe* of Thursday, April 5, 1883, to which I refer the hon. gentlemen who have any desire to know. But now the paternity of the historic phrase that "but little confidence is to be placed in the breed" is clearly placed where it belongs, and that is with the present leader of the House. We now know exactly what opinion, when the election was on, that hon. gentleman entertained about the gentlemen he is now patronizing. It is well for the House to have that little matter settled. It was disputed and denied publicly by the Secretary of State, if my memory serves me right, and although I do not see him here, I have no doubt that his friends can communicate with him, and show him where the authority for the statement can be found.

Mr. DICKEY—Where is that ?

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT—The letter is dated May 20th, 1879.

The Hon. F. LANGEIER having at considerable length stated the alleged circumstances, and dwelt upon the forged letter for which it was attempted now to make Sir Charles Tupper responsible (although as pointed out in the debate by the Hon. Mr. Dickey, when the accusation was first brought in the

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Globe in April, 1883, shortly after the papers were stolen and the forgeries perpetrated, the *Globe's* heading, referring to the matter, was: "Sir John's real opinion of Catholic electors!"

Sir CHARLES TUPPER rose and said:—

Mr. Chairman, when the honourable leader of the Opposition stated, a few evenings ago, that I had, on a former occasion stated in reference to the Roman Catholics, that I had no confidence in the breed, I promptly challenged the accuracy of that statement, and I defied any man living to produce any such statement ever made by me during my life. A good many things have happened since 1879, and I had a vague recollection of a charge of this kind having been made either against myself or against the late Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald; but I felt perfectly certain that it was quite impossible that I ever could have made such a statement as that, as it was in contradiction to the whole tenor of my public life, and I am very much obliged to the hon. member for Quebec (Mr. Langelier) for having given me an opportunity of meeting this attempted support of that slander, on the present occasion. I denounced it then as an unfounded slander, and I am prepared to prove that I properly so denounced it. The statement here is in a letter addressed by me to Mr. John A. Macdonell. In that letter it is said:

"I have consulted Sir John about that matter of the Old Bank of Upper Canada, and we have decided to knock off the interest as you suggest. The case will go to Council forthwith, as Sir John says but little confidence is to be placed in the breed."

It is not a statement, therefore made by me. It does not profess to be a statement made by me. Sir John said that. That is the only construction I can give this letter. I see the hon. gentleman smiling and evidently under the impression that some little quibble can be raised on this point; but I am happy to say that I stand here in the position to-night not only of throwing back this vile and miserable slander upon the parties who have ventured to bring it up here, but of giving the most convincing evidence possible of its entire falsity. How any gentleman, how any intelligent man could suppose that I, professing, as I do in this matter, my desire to obtain the approval and meet the views of a gentleman who had addressed me on a public question—how any man of the lowest order of intelligence could suppose that I, in writing to a Roman Catholic gentleman, would make use of such an expression as that, passes my comprehension. The circumstances occurred so long ago as 1879, and a good deal having happened of interest since that period, my recollection was very hazy of the

matter, but I recollected that some such charge had been made and had been promptly refuted at the time. But happily for me, a gentleman who was a prominent actor in the whole of this matter, and who consequently has the subject more within his recollection, Mr. John A. Macdonell, a barrister of high character and standing in this country, a Roman Catholic gentleman, who was the person who communicated with me with reference to this business, and with whom I had this correspondence, wrote me a letter which I received yesterday. I am not quite aware where my private secretary is, but shall have great pleasure in laying before the House that letter from Mr. John A. Macdonell, the gentleman mainly concerned in this transaction, and a member of the firm of Foy, Tupper and Macdonell, with whom this correspondence took place. I may mention at the same time, that Mr. Foy is a Roman Catholic gentleman of as high standing as any man in this country—I shall say nothing about the third partner in the firm. But that it could be supposed possible, that I in addressing the firm of Foy, Macdonell and Tupper, would use such language as that, or that even if Sir John Macdonald had made use of such a term, I would repeat it in a letter which, if it had any influence at all, would necessarily and naturally be shown to his Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, passes my comprehension. Mr. Macdonell, who remembers the facts perfectly, has addressed a letter to me stating that no such words were contained in the letter addressed by me to him, and he adds that these letters were stolen out of the office of Foy and Macdonell and that a vile forgery was perpetrated by interpolating those words. The facts as I have said, have long since passed from my mind, but I had perfect confidence in challenging any man living to pretend that any such statement or any evidence of any such statement ever had been made by me. Mr. Macdonell, unsolicited by me, sent me a letter which I will have great pleasure in laying before the House to-morrow. I would do so at this moment, but cannot find my private secretary, to whom I gave it for the purpose of having it type-written, in order that it might be more easily read. Mr. Macdonell informed me that, with my approval, he proposed to send a copy of the letter to the hon. leader of the Opposition. He declares that his letter never contained any words of the kind, that those papers were stolen from the office of Foy, Macdonell and Tupper, and that this forgery was then perpetrated and given to the press. I need not waste much more time on this question, and I leave it for the committee to decide how hard driven hon. gentlemen opposite are to find some evidence by which they can attack the character of a man who, from the commencement of his pub-

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lic life down to this hour, has never committed an act or uttered a word with reference to the Roman Catholic body in this country that has not been of the most respectful character. I need not take up the time of the committee longer than to say that I shall have great pleasure in giving the evidence that this letter of mine which was shown—if my memory serves me rightly—I read it over hastily—to His Grace the Archbishop, contained no such words and no reference of the kind charged against me. I may mention for the information of hon. gentlemen who may think that this was perpetrated to secure Catholic votes at the election, that this correspondence appears to have taken place in 1879, four years before there was any election.

The discussion being continued by Mr. Mills and others, and the Hon. L. H. Davies having suggested that Sir Charles Tupper did not deny of his own knowledge and recollection that he had used the offensive words, but he based his denial upon the statements contained in Mr. Macdonell's letter,

Sir CHARLES TUPPER said: "I did deny most emphatically, and the hon. gentleman knows that I denied it, and I challenged any man living to prove that I ever in my life used any such language."

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.)—I did not understand the hon. gentleman when he rose a few moments ago, to say that he had sufficient recollection of the letter to enable him to pronounce those words to be an interpolation and a forgery, but that Mr. Macdonell would say so.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER—I have given it the most emphatic denial a man can give any statement and defied any person to prove it, and I offered to produce Mr. Macdonell's letter, in which he declared that the papers were stolen and that no such statement was in the letter, and that it was a forgery.

Mr. DAVIES (P.E.I.)—I am not questioning any statement of the hon. gentleman, but I am merely asking whether he says that those words were a forgery.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER—I do. I say that such words were never written by me in my life, and have said so repeatedly.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell)—I have nothing further to add. The hon. gentleman says he has not read the rest of the correspondence and cannot speak with regard to it. I just rose for the purpose of calling attention to the facts which I have stated, and

I understand the hon. gentleman, not only to deny upon the statement of Mr. Macdonell, but upon his own recollection that any such letter was written by him.

On the 14th April, Sir Charles Tupper addressed the House as follows :—

Sir CHARLES TUPPER—I have not taken up a great deal of the time of the committee because I was very anxious that nothing should emanate from the supporters of this Bill which would lend any countenance to the obstruction with which it has been met. But I feel it due to myself and to the committee to draw attention to a little episode which occurred in this discussion a few nights ago. The hon. leader of the Opposition, in a somewhat strong criticism and censure of my course, charged me with two things. One was with having incurred the reprobation of the late Right Hon. Sir John Thompson, and the other was with having spoken in terms of contempt of the great Roman Catholic body in this country. I gave those statements the promptest possible denial, and I said I was prepared to show that, so far as Sir John Thompson was concerned, down to the close of his life and from its commencement, I enjoyed the esteem and confidence of the right hon. gentleman. I said that I was prepared to meet a letter which was quoted as having been written by Sir John Thompson with an extract from a letter written by himself when he was in Paris in 1893. The other statement was that I had spoken in terms of such profound contempt of the Roman Catholic body as to say that I had “no confidence in the breed.” I met that statement, which was not new, and which, as I said, I had but a dim recollection, as it was a long time ago that the charge was made, with a flat denial.

I met that by a bold and defiant challenge to any man living to produce evidence that I ever uttered such words in my life, or had ever written such words. Subsequently, when I entered the House, I found the hon. member for Quebec Centre (Mr. Lange-lier) reading from the *Globe* newspaper a correspondence in which some such words were used, not as emanating from me, but as stated by me to have been spoken by Sir John A. Macdonald. I then stated that I had received a letter from Mr. John A. Macdonell, a Roman Catholic gentleman, of the firm of Foy, Tupper & Macdonell, at the time this correspondence is purported to have taken place, and that I was prepared to produce the letter from that gentleman, showing the entire falsity of the statement made in reference to myself. Now, Sir, I propose to read to the House

the evidence upon which I give these two statements an emphatic denial. I will just say to the hon. gentleman opposite that I do not think the credit of the House, the credit of the party, or the credit of the country, will be advanced by hon. gentlemen in this House adopting a policy of calumny with reference to any political opponent. I believe the good sense of this country will revolt at measures of that kind for the purpose of advancing the interests of a party, or attacking the character of any public man. I am reminded of the saying of Busenbaum, "Whenever you would ruin a person or a government, begin by spreading calumnies to defame him." Now, I do not think it is creditable to any party, or to any member, to endeavour to sustain its fallen fortunes by adopting such a policy. I propose now to meet this charge by a statement of facts. You will remember that Shakespeare, in Henry IV., says, "Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down." I will first read extracts from a letter, dated at Paris, March 22nd, 1893, written by Sir John Thompson to Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., and copied from the original handwriting of Sir John Thompson, by Mr. Joseph Pope; and I shall be glad to show the original to any person anxious to see it:

" . . . I thank you very heartily for the regard of which you assure me, and I add very sincerely that I should esteem it a great disappointment and mortification if my recent accession to office should be followed by Canada being deprived of the services of one whose position, as a statesman, is a matter of so much pride to her, and for whom I personally have an attachment and loyalty which have grown very deep and strong in twenty years of political association."

I may say that that letter was written on an occasion when I desired to be relieved from the duties of the High Commissioner in London, and it was in consequence of the letter which I received from Sir John Thompson, containing this statement, that I was dissuaded from carrying out my intention. I may say in reference to the other statement, that I am enabled to give it an emphatic contradiction: and I think it discreditable to any hon. gentleman in this House to rake up old correspondence of so long ago, purporting to have taken place in 1879, and bringing it before this House, when it had already been met by a complete and overwhelming refutation. There is an end of all courtesy in discussion if, when statements have been made and have been met by a complete and overwhelming denial, an hon. gentleman again undertakes to renew the charge, and entirely ignores the refutation that has been made. I will give a statement concerning the correspondence which purported to have taken place, and has

been read by the hon. member for Quebec Centre (Mr. Langelier) and I will now read the refutation of what appeared in the *Globe* of 5th April, 1883. The *Mail*, on the 6th of April, 1883, contained this statement from its Ottawa correspondent, which was published in refutation of the statement contained in the *Globe*.

Sir Charles Tupper then quoted at length the *Mail's* article which had at that time (April 1883) contained not only Sir John Macdonald's and Sir Charles Tupper's denials of the statement that the expression had been used by either of them, but had shown that the papers had been stolen either from Sir Charles Tupper's office or that of Messrs. Foy, Tupper and Macdonell, and the forgery then perpetrated, care having been exercised however, by the forger not to put Sir Charles Tupper's name to the document which he was charged with having written and which contained the alleged objectionable words, although the other documents published were signed by the persons stated to have written them!

Sir Charles after quoting, continued: "There is the complete refutation, and the emphatic declaration by myself at the time these letters first appeared, appears not to have been accepted, and I will assume was not known by the hon. gentleman who made a reference to the statement. I will now read the letter of Mr. Macdonell, who, as I said before, is a Roman Catholic gentleman, and a partner of another Roman Catholic gentleman of the highest standing in this country, Mr. J. J. Foy, of Toronto. No person with a head upon his shoulders can pretend for a single moment that any man could so far forget himself as to write in terms so insulting to a gentleman of a firm comprising two leading Roman Catholics in this country, whatever his opinions might be. I will now read the letter I received from Mr. Macdonell a few days ago:

" Alexandria, April 9th, 1896.

MY DEAR SIR CHARLES:

I have seen with surprise that the old falsehood has been revived to the effect that you once stated that "you had no confidence in the breed," referring to those of your fellow-countrymen who professed the Catholic religion. I had thought that this had long since been disproved and abandoned. Political exigencies would appear, however, to have necessitated its resurrection, and I regret to find that no less a person than Mr. Laurier has been so far imposed upon as to give countenance and repetition to it.

As the statement was originally alleged to have been made by Sir John Macdonald and conveyed by you in a letter to myself, permit me to state very shortly the facts.

Application was made about the year 1879 by the late Archbishop Lynch through me to the Government of Canada for a small concession in respect of some interest in arrears on the purchase by a Catholic institution of the old Bank of Upper Canada building in Toronto. You were Minister of Public Works at the time, and I, acting as solicitor for the Archbishop of Toronto, wrote to you upon the subject. You were inclined to accede to our request, but consulted Sir John Macdonald with regard to it, and conveyed to me Sir John Macdonald's legal opinion that the concession could not be made without a vote of Parliament, it not being, in his view, within the legal competency of the Privy Council to remit moneys due to the Crown. I reported accordingly to my client the Archbishop, to whom I showed your letter, and although considerably disappointed at what we thought was a somewhat forced and technical reason for refusing a request amply justified by the surrounding circumstances, we felt that nothing further was to be done in the face of Sir John's legal decision, to which of necessity, we bowed. It was a matter of public business, and you were naturally guided by Sir John's view of the law and your decision was final and was conveyed to me in the ordinary course of departmental routine. Shortly afterwards, but fortunately not before Archbishop Lynch had seen your letter, the correspondence was purloined from the office of Foy, Tupper & Macdonell, and your letter freely interpolated by some facile hand, appeared in print, with the statement that Sir John had made use of the expression with reference to Archbishop Lynch, and generally including, of course, Mr. Foy and myself.

I was astonished at the stupidity and impudence of the forgery, for such it was, the statement referred to having been forged to a letter genuine in other respects, and published as being an authentic document in its entirety. I was surprised that any rational being could be so stupid as to credit that a man so notoriously astute as Sir John Macdonald, would make use of so offensive a remark, which was to be conveyed to the solicitor for the Archbishop in a letter which he knew must, of necessity, be shown immediately to His Grace, in the ordinary course of business. Secondly, that it could be supposed by any one who was aware of the well-known relations of the most intimate personal friendship which existed between Sir John Macdonald and myself, that Sir John would offer me so gratuitous an insult in regard to a high dignity of the church to which I belonged, and to all who, in common with myself, professed the Catholic religion; and thirdly, that it would be supposed to be conceivable that the father of my partner could be selected by Sir John as the medium of communicating so grave a breach of all those amenities observed among gentlemen to the son of his own former partner and life-long friend. And I was only a degree less surprised that it should be suggested that persons in our rank of life had recourse either in our conversation or correspondence with each other to such language or expressions which I have been given to understand are customary among loafers at the street corners, and the *habitués* of the slums.

When I discussed the matter with the Archbishop, he dismissed it with the remark that it was the first time he had seen it suggested that Sir John Macdonald was a fool, and that he was not to be caught by any such chaff as that.

Let me state in conclusion, that Archbishop Lynch and Sir John Macdonald continued, until the death of the former, to be warmest personal friends, and I, who was then a resident of Toronto, and enjoyed the confidence of both, was frequently the intermediary between them in relation to matters of common interest. His Grace died on May 12, 1888, and, writing to him in March 5th, 1887, shortly after the general elections of that year, Sir John concluded a somewhat lengthy letter as follows—"And now, my dear Archbishop, let me again thank you most warmly for all that you did for us in the recent campaign. I can assure you that my colleagues and myself gratefully appreciate your kindness."

Having had something to do with the action of the Archbishop thus warmly acknowledged, and knowing that it would be gratifying to me who was then an invalid, His Grace, with great courtesy and kindness, sent me this letter and told me to keep it, and it thus happens to be in my possession. It indicates, I venture to submit, that Sir John had very much confidence, indeed, both personal and political in his

friend the Archbishop, and those of his faith, and that he had very good reason therefor; and further, that the confidence was mutual.

I have not the pleasure of Mr. Lavrier's acquaintance, but I feel sure that after this statement (of which I will forward him a copy) he would not repeat a story which he had been deceived into supposing had some foundation in fact.

I am, my dear Sir Charles,

Faithfully yours,

J. A. MACDONELL.

The original of that letter is under my hand. I will now add to that, a letter by His Grace Archbishop Lynch, in his own handwriting, to Mr. Macdonell, treating with profound contempt the insinuation that he could be supposed to have lent himself to countenance any such statement ever having been made:

St. Michael's Palace,
Toronto, October 2nd, 1895.

MY DEAR MR. MACDONELL:

I am sorry you have taken so much to heart a letter written many years ago, that you say was interpolated. You are both a Catholic and a gentleman, incapable of being disrespectful to a prelate of your church. I am sure that Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper are too much gentlemen and politicians to say anything that might offend a very large portion of their constituents.

I am, dear Sir, Yours faithfully,

+JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH,

Archbishop of Toronto.

I am quite sure, Sir, after this refutation, I need not say a single word more than that I think it is greatly to be deprecated that any hon. gentleman lends his ear to any rumour of fact dating far back, and which, as I have already shown, was promptly refuted in the most emphatic and thorough manner in which it is possible any statement could be refuted. If, under those circumstances, questions of that kind can be revived and treated as authentic and the circumstance ignored, that they were refuted at the time they were originally stated, there is an end of all parliamentary courtesy—I will not say courtesy, but fair-play. I do not believe the interests of any party are likely to be promoted by anything of the kind.

The following letter was addressed on the 13th April, 1896, by Sir Charles Tupper, to Mr. Macdonell.

Department of the Secretary of State.

Minister's Office,

Ottawa, April 13th, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. MACDONELL:

I have to thank you for your very timely letter on the 19th instant, respecting the old exploded charge made against me, that I had used opprobrious epithets in alluding to the Catholic body in Ontario. Your letter is admirable both as to matter and style. As I telegraphed you, I used it on the spur of the moment in the House of Commons on Saturday night as the matter came up again and there was no time to communicate with you.

I do not see how it could be improved upon, and I should be much obliged by your forwarding a copy to Mr. Laurier. I do not see how it is possible to add anything to your explanation or to the courteous letter which you propose to send to the leader of the Opposition. Your action shall certainly settle the matter for all time to come.

Believe me, with repeated thanks, my dear Mr. Macdonell,

Very faithfully yours,

CHARLES TUPPER.

JONH A. MACDONELL, Esq., Q.C.

Having thus secured Sir Charles Tupper's permission to send a copy of the letter addressed to him (Sir C. T.), Mr. Macdonell addressed the following communication to Mr. Laurier:

Alexandria, April 13th, 1896.

Sir:

Although it is not my privilege to have the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, I deem it courteous and proper to forward you the enclosed copy of a letter which I addressed to Sir Charles Tupper on the 9th instant, with reference to a statement made by you in the House of Commons on the 8th, to the following effect as reported in the press.

"Roman Catholics everywhere know what esteem the honorable gentleman has for them. They know that at one time he expressed himself—to use the very choice language he then made use of—'that he had no confidence in the breed.' If he had no confidence in the breed, let me tell him that the breed reciprocates the compliment."

I had intended forwarding you this copy by the same post which took the original to Sir Charles, but was unavoidably prevented by unforeseen circumstances from doing so until to day. I beg that you will acquit me of any intentional discourtesy and with every consideration which your high character and station alike demand at the hands of a political opponent however pronounced.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. A. MACDONELL.

THE HONORABLE WILFRID LAURIER, M.P.

It is to be noted that after Sir Charles Tupper had on the 14th April, read to the House, Mr. Macdonell's letter of the 9th, both Mr. Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright, who had made the charge against him, followed him in the debate on the matter then before the House (the Remedial Bill) but that neither of these gentlemen thought well in view of the complete refutation contained in Mr. Macdonell's letter to refer in any way whatever to the matter of the charge previously made by them. They then and there abandoned it when challenged by the statements, and Sir Charles Tupper thus stands vindicated of as grossly unfair and untruthful a charge as was ever preferred against a public man on the floor of the House of Commons, or in the press of this country.

The following letter forms a fitting conclusion to this episode :

Bishop's House,
Alexandria, April 28th, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. MACDONELL:

It afforded me great pleasure and gratification to read your letter to Sir Charles Tupper, which refuted so entirely and satisfactorily the absurd statement that either he or that great and distinguished statesman Sir John Macdonald had ever alluded to Archbishop Lynch or to the Catholics of Ontario in the terms with which they were charged.

Let me say that in my humble judgment should this exploded allegation ever again be resuscitated with a view to injure Sir Charles Tupper, it must recoil upon the heads of those who can be guilty of such conduct.

You have done your part well, and I heartily congratulate and commend you.

I remain, dear Mr. Macdonell,

Yours sincerely,

† ALEXANDER MACDONELL,

Bishop of Alexandria.

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